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Near East/South Asia Report

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NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA REPORT

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EGYPT

BRIEFS

NEW TELEPHONE SERVICE--The installation of 13,770 new telephone lines will be completed in the regions surrounding the Nile Delta and South Giza during the months of September and October. Engineer Sulayman Mutawalli asked the Minister of Transportation and Communications to establish accounts with the new subscribers to exchanges in this area. Included are 2,800 new lines in Shibin al-Kawm, 1,100 in Tukh, 1,600 in Tala, 3,000 lines in the Rashid exchange, and 6,270 new lines added to the exchanges in al-Badrashayn, al-Hawamidiyah, Abu al-Numrus, al-Saff, (Fakhr 'Ammar), (al-Akhsas), and Atfih. The minister confirmed that the ministry's policy emphasizes services in the governorates and is not limited to Cairo. This is to implement the rapid extension of services nationwide and to consolidate communications between cities and important centers. [Text] [Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 3 Aug 85 p 1]

NEW AUTOMOBILE FACTORY--Misr-Iran Bank decided to finance a loan of \$700 million to the American company, General Motors, which will use it to build an automobile factory in Egypt. The factory will be built in a desert city located between Cairo and Alexandria. Its annual capacity will reach 80,000 to 100,000 German Opals, which are produced by General Motors. General Motors has decided to establish a number of support industries in order to supply the factory with spare parts and send the remainder to the parent company in Germany. Misr-Iran Bank said that it has decided to make the loan because it is participating in increasing nontraditional Egyptian exports, giving it greater influence on diversifying exports and penetrating other markets. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 17 Aug 85 pp 35-36]

CSO: 4504/474

LIBYA

JANA PUBLISHES STATISTICS OF LIBYAN PROGRESS

LD291531 Tripoli JANA in English 1440 GMT 29 Aug 85

[Text] Tripoli, 14 Dhu-al-Hijjah, 29 August, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY--In 16 years of progress, achievement, and a fight against poverty and backwardness, the figures speak again as the years go by.

The sums allocated to the sector of transport and sea communications in the 5-year plan of transformation 1981-1985 were 2,351,210,000 Libyan dinars (L.D.) Highways, minor roads covered a distance of 23,000 kilometers by June 1985.

Sources of the Secretariat of Transport say that the study of the new railway network between Tripoli, Misratah, Birak, Sabha covering a distance of 1632 kilometers was recently finished.

The sources also pointed out that in the field of telephone lines increased by a ratio of 7 phones per 100 citizens. The maritime fleet has been increased by 14 supertankers each with a capacity of 64,000 tonnes of crude oil.

On these achievements Muhammad Mabruk Al-Rugai, JANA's correspondent writes:

"The Misratah-Birak railway lines will serve the new steel works complex.

"New railway terminals one of which will be in Tripoli and 11 other towns will be built and ten stations on the line linking Tripoli with Misratah together with depot to serve the transport of goods by rail, 18 other stations will be built along the Misratah-Sabha line.

"The feasibility study of the railway lines between Bu Qurayn and Imsad a distance of 1300 kilometers was also finished and 22 stations are to be built along this line.

"Air transport has been boosted by 28 new passenger and goods planes and the airports of Tripoli, Benghazi, Sabha, Ghat, Birak and Bani Walid have been re-equipped with up to date facilities.

"Seven major sea ports were enlarged and their capacity has increased from handling 3 million to 7 million tonnes of goods. These ports have received 76,525 ships with a load of 106 million tonnes.

"A number of metrological [as received] offices have been built across the Jamahiriyah as part of the ongoing programme of transformation."

LIBYA

BRIEFS

TUBRUQ OIL REFINERY FIGURES--Tubruq, 14 Aug (JANA)--Initial tests are currently being carried out on operating Tubruq oil refinery, built on a total area of 737.5 hectares, which is designed to have an output capacity of 20,000 barrels per day. The huge refinery contains a production unit, cooling unit, incinerator unit, and daily storage unit, as well as a unit for storing fuel and treatment fluids and a distribution storage unit containing 25 tanks of various sizes. The daily output of the refinery is: 9,089 barrels of heavy fuel oil, 5,233 barrels of diesel, 611 barrels of kerosene, 1,400 barrels of aircraft fuel, 3,043 barrels of gasoline, and 244 barrels of heavy petroleum.
[Text] [Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1030 GMT 14 Aug 85 LD]

CSO: 4500/195

MAURITANIA

BRIEFS

PRC DONATES CORN--The People's Republic of China will supply 9,100 metric tons of corn as its grain aid to Mauritania for this (?year), the Chinese ambassador in Nouakchott announced this morning during a discussion with Dr (Mohamed Sidiya Ould Mouktar). The greater Nouakchott area will receive 6,100 metric tons of the consignment, while 3,000 metric tons will go to the rest of the country. Receiving the ambassador, Dr (Mohamed Mouktar) thanked the PRC for this gift which comes after the 3,000 metric tons of wheat supplied in 1983 to help the people affected by drought. [passage omitted] The Chinese envoy had earlier praised the courage with which the Mauritanian people are confronting the drought, and the attention paid by the entire population to agriculture, a sector to which the Mauritanian government attaches great importance. He also reaffirmed China's readiness to continue helping Mauritania. [Excerpts] [Nouakchott Domestic Service in French 1430 GMT 3 Sep 85 AB]

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MOROCCO

BRIEFS

HASSAN ANNOUNCES AMNESTIES--On the occasion of 'Id al-Adha, His Majesty King Hassan II has commuted the prison sentences of 172 convicts, erased the prison sentences but kept the fine or what is left of it concerning 27 persons, reduced the prison sentences of 157 prisoners and commuted the life sentence to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 convicts. [Summary] [Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Aug 85 LD]

CSO: 4500/196

BAHRAIN

BUSINESSMEN VOICE CONCERNS ABOUT CAUSEWAY

Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 1 Jun 85 pp 39-40

[Article: "Bahrain Causeway Troubles Bahrain Businessmen"]

[Text] The Bahraini cabinet has requested ideas and recommendations from the Bahrain Causeway committee chaired by the minister of the interior concerning the movement of transportation, freight, the communications network and legal and administrative measures related to the border on the bridge between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

This step came after some Bahrain businessmen expressed their concern about the ramifications of loosening the restrictions on retail merchandizing between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain after the opening of the causeway.

The businessmen indicated that the Ministry of Commerce is currently studying a plan seeking to do away with some of the laws concerning the movement of goods between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. This is within the framework of the unified economic agreement of the Cooperation Council states.

As a result Bahraini businessmen will suffer harm in view of the difference in prices between the two countries. Some businessmen confirmed that a meeting had taken place at a high level in which Ministry of Commerce officials and Chamber of Commerce members had looked into this question but the discussions between the two sides had not reached agreement.

The businessmen point out that measures pertaining to customs on the bridge have not been worked out yet. However, the Ministry of Commerce confirms that some of the businessmen are concerned only for their own interests and an indication of that is that prices of goods in Bahrain are unjustifiably high and the margin of profit for some businessmen is sometimes as much as 120 percent.

It appears that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is well apprised of this worry which has begun to possess Bahrain's businessmen. To contain this problem the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in al-Dammam in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia invited the members of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce to a joint meeting to be held in al-Dammam.

Some Saudi businessmen attended the joint meeting, and those present debated the situation which commercial exchange will be in after the opening of the causeway. It was decided to form a joint follow-up committee of 10 members to examine the topics raised at the meeting, which lasted 2 days. These included the possible establishment of a Saudi-Bahrain company which would take care of marketing and transportation operations between the two countries as well as the combination of some similar factories in Eastern Saudi Arabia and Bahrain so as to avoid duplication and price conflicts.

On another matter Shaykh Ibrahim Bin 'Abdallah Al Khalifah, project coordinator for the causeway, confirmed that large loads moving from Saudi Arabia to Bahrain would stop at a specific point at the causeway to be unloaded onto smaller trucks and then to be transported into Bahrain.

Some predictions concerning the number of additional cars that will fill the streets of Bahrain after the opening of the causeway have reached 29,000 cars per day. It is known that the causeway will open officially in December of 1985, but it is not probable that all the roads will be ready at that time.

12390

CSO: 4404/418

BAHRAIN

FREEDOM OF PRESS AT ISSUE

Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 24 Jun 85 p 15

[Article by Ali Mahmud: "Bahrain Journalism on Trial; A Journalism Case Between AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ and the University of Bahrain Generates Debate in the Courtroom Over Freedom of the Press"]

[Text] The two parties to this matter are the single daily newspaper and the only university in Bahrain! Its importance lies in the cultural implications which the case brings to light and which have arrived at the portals of the court.

No one in the Gulf would have ever expected the breezes of rebuke to change into storms of discord to be litigated in court between the dean of the University of Bahrain and one of the pillars of Bahraini journalism. The case, however, burst forth to dark dimensions extent, polarizing the public, which is now watching to see if journalism has either a cultural role or a bit of spiritual influence or any measure at all of freedom of expression. Some people have imagined it to be a conflict of personalities while others point to the fact that a lofty educational institution is clashing with a venerable journalistic edifice. Others claim that it is a conflict of contradictions, a battle between the principle of freedom of the press in investigating and publishing the news and between the influence of the powerful over the populace.

The state has remained neutral, confirming without explanation that the word of the court is the arbiter in the first and last instance. In the absence of parliament the Bahraini government has persevered in opening up the field for freedom of expression to a reasonable extent in the pages of AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ, which is the only Arabic language daily newspaper published here. In addition, general official policy makes it clear that the executive branch sees nothing wrong at all in empowering journalism with the right to investigate any aspect of governmental efforts.

Ahmad Salman Kamal, editor-in-chief of AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ, believes that journalism has a role and a message. He confirms that the freedom of the press is guaranteed at the highest levels of the state. The role of journalism, in his opinion, is to inform, to educate, to guide, and to entertain. Its purpose is to participate in the building of the nation and to foster a sound structure spiritually as well as physically, heart and soul. Journalists are the eyes

of the people in the most important of matters. If journalism shines light on achievement and creativity, then the people sing praises, rewarding those who made the accomplishment. However, if journalism uncovers any wrongdoing, the people condemn it and thereafter those in power put matters in order.

In this way the people watch with baited breath and pounding hearts these bouts between Ahmad Kamal and the dean of the University of Bahrain, Doctor Jalil al-'Aridi. The dangers of the struggle are latent in its nature. At first glance it appears that the journalist did not overstep the boundaries of his profession, and all that the dean has to do is to publish a convincing response to bring about a satisfactory resolution--if required--but the dean was not satisfied with a response, resorting instead to litigation. When the Associated Press knocked on his door, he refused to speak, insisting that "I do not have the right to speak, the case is in the hands of the law."

However, Ahmad Kamal could not keep silent confronted with journalists' questions. He said, "I welcome the idea of setting this matter before the law, as a matter of fact I wish more than ever to go to court. Believe me, it is not important whether I lose or win. Rather what is important is that the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press come out ahead."

Ahmad Kamal is clean of heart and hand, as those who know him confirm, although his cleverness is hidden in bashfulness behind the features of a face which expresses simplicity, congeniality and responsiveness to the least indication of liking or sympathy. Both his friends and opponents say that he never set out gratuitously on his campaign against the dean of the university because he knows unlimited caution and impartiality and truth in investigating and publishing news.

Ahmad Kamal incited the disagreement on 17 March when he wrote in his usual column entitled "From the Pages of the Week" a long article about what was going on at the University of Bahrain. Despite the article's mine fields, the writer held strictly to the procedural principles of scholarly journalism. The introduction brought forth a chain of questions and remarks expressed frankly without insinuation. Perhaps the matter upon which the article was founded was Ahmad Kamal's having obtained what he described as a report in the form of a letter from nine professors at the University who had visited AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ to complain.

As it was published the article directed blame--according to the complaining parties--on the dean of the university for the unjust treatment received by some Bahrain professors who missed out on certain positions in the college when his relatives and foreigners were preferred. The article contained specific factual evidence. It was supported by names and was void of any ambiguity. The article also brought up the point that the university had closed its doors to journalists.

The dean of the university immediately got angry and reacted with a long letter to AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ. Then Ahmad Kamal did not hesitate to publish the whole thing. The rebutting doctor [pun on the name al-'Aridi] confirmed that the contents of the article were nothing more than "mistakes and misrepresentations of the facts." He said that the dean of the university was working to blacken

the spirit of friendship and the air of cooperation in the teacher's association, comprising 130 members of more than 20 different nationalities.

The dean said that some of the positions about which it had been said that he had assigned them to his relatives were in reality assigned 3 years before he took over as dean. He also said that the university sets a condition that the purpose for any journalist's visit to the university be known in advance, and that the administration expects that the journalist will remain respectful of the place as an educational institution. The dean also defended his own policies, rebutting the allegations contained in the AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ article.

It would have been possible to end the matter at this point, if it had not been for a stream of letters to Khawlah Matar, editor of readers' mail at AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ. Khawlah published the letters, which contained a certain amount of support for Ahmad Kamal and disapproval for the dean of the faculty. Since the editor of the readers' mail is an independent person above any form of bias, the readers from all over Bahrain sensed that the position of Ahmad Kamal had come out ahead.

After the stream of letters, Ahmad Kamal continued the article by objecting to the dean's reply and then he rebutted the rebuttal.

He said, "In this newspaper we will continue to call for the truth and to stand for the truth...and with the oppressed whose rights were taken away and whose abilities and futures were damaged. If necessary we will return time after time to that. Our premise will always be the interest and reputation of this country and the interests of this country's people working in all fields.

All of this has moved to the courts as a civil and a criminal complaint; the dean of the university has confirmed that neither of these is against Ahmad Kamal but rather it is the university against the newspaper. Ahmad Kamal believes that the whole case very simply contains dangers which threaten the freedom of the press with a decision by the authority of the court. Thus, as it appears, the struggle seeks to set a precedent which would open the door for eminent people to tread the path of freedom of expression.

Bahrain is witnessing an exciting development in the field of civilized interaction in the area of journalism. There is a generation of national writers who believe in the leadership and the nation, as well as a generation of a growing number of readers who follow their policy, all of whom would like to see a precedent for the freedom of the press.

Perhaps the struggle of the dean of the university with journalism will decide the case in the behalf of this educated generation while the benefit will be civilization and the loss by one of the parties will only be legal.

12390

CSO: 4404/418

ISRAEL

ZE'EV SCHIFF COMMENTARY ON SHARON'S VIEW OF JORDAN

Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Aug 85 p 13

[English version provided by Israel Government Press Office]

[Text] If Ariel Sharon were given the chance to take action against the PLO in Jordan, he surely would embark on part two of his Lebanon war, disrupted (he contends) by "the Zionist left" and the press, which stabbed the nationalist camp in the back. That was his original plan: after the PLO and the Syrians had been driven out of Lebanon, to turn against Jordan and refashion it into Palestine. Instead of peace for Galilee, a new name for the war would have been proclaimed--peace for Judea, or peace for Samaria. The grandiose Sharon plan hasn't changed in its main points. What we don't know is what Sharon would propose doing were the PLO headquarters moved to Cairo, as was suggested. Would he propose attacking these objectives deep inside Egypt? Or abrogating the Camp David Accords?

The fact that Part One of the war went awry and that Israel paid a heavy price for its Sharonist adventure has not put the lid on Sharon's plans for Jordan. Sharon is conserving and gathering strength. From Shimon Peres he received the imprimatur for his return, and he's now exploiting the weakness and impotence of his rivals in the Likud. His plan against Hussein's Jordan is in existence, and will take definite shape the moment Sharon again holds a position of power in the defense sphere. Unlike most of his opponents, Sharon has always excelled at sticking to the objective, even if it be a wrong-headed one. It should be recalled that we are talking here, not about some mere plan for a reprisal action, but about Sharon's world-view.

The heart of the plan against Hussein's Jordan is to instigate the process of Jordan's palestinization. The hope that the character of the Arab-Israeli conflict will undergo a sea-change the moment the Palestinians take control of Jordan has been cherished in the hearts of Israeli leaders for many years now--even in the alignment. It's not an idea which originated with Sharon. The difference is that while other Israeli leaders feel that this is inevitable and that the demographics should be allowed to do their work, Sharon is prepared to encourage the demographics and expedite the palestinization of Jordan via military or other forceful means. Indeed, Jordan and Israel alike are faced with the demographic danger of the Palestinians. It is a time-bomb for both countries. In Israel, it is liable one day to explode in a civil war of

one sort or another, while in Jordan, the danger is one of a creeping or sudden Palestinian takeover. By egging on the process on the Jordanian side, Sharon and his cohorts are hoping to defuse the danger on our side--to give the conflict the appearance of a territorial rivalry between the new Palestine (i.e. Jordan) and an Israel which controls all of Eretz Israel.

It makes no difference whether Sharon recently proposed responding to terrorist actions in the territories and in Israel by bombing PLO headquarters in Jordan. One doesn't begin with sudden bombings in the heart of Amman. In Lebanon, too, things didn't commence with the invasion and the incursion into Beirut; first one must build one's "case," nurturing the danger into something which public opinion can't bear, into a threat to survival. Over time, many will come to believe that King Hussein is the one responsible for murders such as those of the couple of Mt. Gilboa. But just as driving the PLO out of Beirut and Tripoli didn't put an end to terrorist actions inside Israel and the territories, so Hussein's ouster from power and his replacement by a Palestinian ruler won't end the conflict between the two peoples. Only a political settlement and compromise can put us on the track to halting terrorism.

Part Two of the war in Lebanon could be carried out the same way Part One was, via divisions and brute military force. But that's too simplistic an approach. It could work if Hussein were to do something foolish, thereby providing an excuse: for instance, if he were to join a coalition on the eastern front to attack Israel. He need not repeat his big mistake of 1967; it would be enough for him to dispatch troops to fight Israel the way he did in 1973 for this to be exploited, assuming Sharon holds a position of power in Israel's defense.

But that's only one possibility. In order to spur the process of Palestinization in Jordan, there's no need for divisions and for the Air Force. The modern history of the Middle East is overflowing with examples of rulers eliminated by assassination. Hussein himself has been a constant target for those who sought to end Hashemite rule in Jordan. The conspirators have always been Arabs, but that need not be so in future. Various scenarios are possible in such a situation. If responsibility for Israel's intelligence and security services should one day fall into the hands of a man without inhibitions, then anything could happen.

Although Sharon is serving in the government, he doesn't exercise influence and dictate policy as he did in the second Begin government. The alternative currently left him is to prevent Hussein from gaining strength, and not to conduct negotiations with him which would grant him status in the territories. This approach is shared by other Herut leaders: even if the PLO didn't exist, they would refuse to negotiate with it on the territories. According to this approach, there's nothing to talk about with Hussein, either; at most, one could negotiate with him regarding the East Bank. That's why the most recent murders in Israel were used for a proposal (which was about to come up in the inner cabinet) that Israel not negotiate with Hussein so long as the latter maintains contacts with the PLO. If the Prime Minister is induced to discuss this proposal, he will find himself on a collision course with Egypt--which is conducting intensive contacts of its own with the moderate PLO wing.

Hussein currently worries Sharon and his party satellites for another reason: one of the unexpected consequences of the war in Lebanon has been the pragmatic moderation of part of the PLO. Hussein has exploited this development, just as Damascus has gained control over the extremist segment of the PLO. Hussein is seeking to steer and guide the moderate segment of the organization. The U.S. Administration believes it pays to invest in this attempt, and its latest initiative and willingness to meet with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation are based on this. The new U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, John Whitehead, told Foreign Minister Shamir that Israel has nothing to lose: if it should turn out that the moderate PLO is not yet ripe for the process and that Hussein was wrong, Washington will realize that the Arab side misled it, and Israel will not have interfered with the attempt. But Whitehead failed to recall that for Shamir and Sharon, King Hussein--like the PLO (extremist or moderate)--isn't a partner for negotiations on the future of Judea and Samaria.

In the Jordan-PLO rapprochement process, there are certain changes in the field. Hussein, in his efforts to steer the moderate wing of the PLO, has allowed himself to take steps such as he hasn't taken since the 1970 civil war. He has allowed some of Arafat's forces and command headquarters to situate themselves in Jordan. Amman and Damascus are each offering protection to a different segment of the PLO. But while Damascus exercise real control over its organizations, there's no certainty that the process will be the same in Jordan.

This doesn't mean that Jordan is allowing the PLO to operate from its territory against Israel. Those in Israel who are supposed to know what's happening in Jordan are well aware of the effort made by Jordan's security services to check infiltrations from Syria into Jordan, and from Jordan into Israel. Certain Israeli experts say in this context that the Jordanian Army is Israel's best border patron on its eastern boundary. That's how things are now; but it's impossible to know how things will develop in future. So long as Hussein rules, the current situation will surely continue. That's the risk Hussein takes. But what today looks like a quiet PLO headquarters could tomorrow turn out to be the Trojan horse--and it poses a danger first and foremost to Hussein's regime. Israel must warn him, but not fight against him. Washington, too, is aware of the risks inherent in the basically positive Jordanian-PLO rapprochement. Anyone seeking a settlement with Jordan and the Palestinians need not be put off by this rapprochement, which will lead either to further moderation in the Palestinian camp, or to a further split in the PLO, or both. The right has reason to worry, not because of the risks Hussein is taking in his own country (that, after all, is what they want), but because of the possibility that Hussein might grow stronger. For this reason, Sharon's plan for Jordan will surely come up again.

CSO: 4400/245

ISRAEL

MK SHITRIT ON CURRENT SITUATION

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 12 Jul 85 p 7

[Text]

HERUT MK Meir Shitrit thinks the government did not go far enough in its economic programme. As for those opposing the use of emergency decrees, Shitrit argues, "I prefer decrees to save democracy than allowing the situation to deteriorate so far that people will seek a strong man to rescue the country from economic collapse and disorder."

As a canny politician with an ear to the ground, Shitrit is not known as ever having supported lost causes or unpopular measures. His all-out support of the new economic plan certainly contrasts with the stand of his party's ministers, who largely opposed it in the cabinet. Of course, there are those who regard his stand as a function of his support for the party faction led by Yitzhak Shamir. The vice premier and Transport Minister Haim Corfu provided the only Herut backing for the economic programme.

MK Shitrit regards Deputy Premier David Levy's opposition with equanimity. "Unity does not mean uniformity but diversity. A minister is justified in fighting for his view inside the government. But what I do regret is that he stayed away from the confidence vote in the Knesset. I appreciate the depth of his sincere concern about the effect on the working masses of the plan, which everyone concedes does have many risks." A member of the Knesset Finance Committee, the MK contends that the government had no choice but to adopt this emergency programme. "Soon there would have been no dollars to buy food and fuel. We were on the brink of collapse. But I think the government didn't go far enough!

"While imposing inescapable burdens on the populace, it did not follow suit with its own operations. There should be deeper cuts in government spending. I would close down such departments as the Absorption Ministry and the Religious Affairs Ministry, along with all the local religious councils," he says somewhat gleefully. I comment that the two ministries he is so willing to abolish belong to other parties.

THE YOUNG MK protests that party loyalty has nothing to do with it, mentioning his long-standing proposal to abolish the Jewish Agency bureaucracy, thereby saving \$500 million, although it would certainly affect members of his party. He sees no reason why the axe should not fall on the Agency/WZO aliya department even though at present it is his party's bailiwick. He would replace the works with an aliya officer at each Israel Consulate. His frequent contacts with Diaspora communities, he says, have taught him the uselessness of the WZO emissaries - the money could be better used here.

A captain in the reserves, Shitrit urges a bigger cut in the defence budget. Peace with Egypt and the withdrawal from Lebanon mean that Israel can afford to reduce military spending. For a start he would cut the number of days of reserve call-ups; he contends that the military bureaucracy wastes the time of too many men called up for reserve duty.

Shitrit sounds as neo-conservative as Shamir's party ally, Minister without Portfolio Moshe Arens. He favours minimal government involvement in the economy. In fact,

he wants the government to sell all state companies. "I know that I'm likely to get into hot water with my party comrades serving on the boards of various state companies." But he would sell them all - from Israel Aviation Industries to the Israel Broadcasting Authority to the postal services.

The highly successful chairman of the Yavne local council, Shitrit wants more government assistance for weaker local authorities to cope with economic emergency.

HIGHLY critical of the Histadrut, Shitrit says that vested interests in the labour federation's union structure result in its workers in industry being the worst paid. He inveighs against the recent general strike, saying it cost the country over \$100 million. "I fear that the trade union leaders don't appreciate that if the government hadn't acted, there wouldn't be any food to eat."

Shitrit regards the Histadrut leadership as being old-fashioned in its approach to the country's needs. In the past, when we had mass immigration, job security was a prime concern, but the approach has become counter-productive. "It harms the best and most motivated workers. We must tackle over-manning and restrictive employment practices by firstly doing away with the entire system of job tenure. That's at the core of the deterioration of public service in Israel: you can't sack even the biggest loafers."

"The strong works committees we are hearing so much from now are only interested in preserving their own privileges at the public expense, not in protecting the weaker workers."

He scoffs at reports of the dangers of unemployment. "People don't want to work, certainly not in industry. Otherwise why do we have to bring in 80,000 workers from the territories every day?"

Shitrit maintains that Israelis "simply don't think it's worthwhile working in industry or construction because of the low pay." He does not really blame those finishing army service who prefer the dole to getting monthly wages of IS130,000 in hotels and IS200,000 in factories. That is before taxes and other payments, he notes.

This is the right juncture for him to

mention his pet tax reform proposal. While, for example, the gross salary of an electronics engineer here is \$3000, after taxes and other payments he has a take-home pay of \$600. In the U.S., the same engineer would take home some \$2,600. "We have to slash taxes and make it worthwhile for people to work. At present our tax system has reached such a peak that it's anti-productive. My credo is that the government should take less and provide less." (Certainly the most non-populist statement made by a Herut MK so far.)

Among the major obstacles to reforming the tax system, says Shitrit, are not only the lobbyists for the vested interests and big corporations that pay next-to-no taxes, but the old-fashioned mentality of income tax officials. "The government says we're in an emergency, so why don't they come up with unconventional methods of tackling all that black money that's undermining the economy?" he asks, regretting that the Likud and Labour could not have dispensed with the religious parties and "their blackmail."

LIKE David Levy, Shitrit immigrated as a child from Morocco with penniless parents. Like Levy, his first home was in a *ma'abara* transit camp in an abandoned Arab village. Unlike Levy, his entry into politics was not through trade unionist activity and the Histadrut executive, but local government. While Levy was actually a member for a short time of Mapai, in Shitrit's case he formed the Yavne youth list in response to a rebellion against the town's establishment. He turned to Herut after the local Mapai bosses turned him down.

In his 12 years as head of the local council, Yavne has exploded, changing from a village of 4,500 residents to a town of 20,000. Half the residents are under 19 and some 70 per cent below 30. He employs 400 workers, half of them in the town educational system.

Budget cuts will force him to sack 20 employees, but having never stretched his spending beyond his revenue, Shitrit won't have to reduce too many services.

He has found an ingenious way to extend the kindergarten year by a month by spreading the burden

among the parents, IS30,000 per family. "The kids are kept out of their parents' hair, and kindergarten staff continue to get salaries. Everyone is happy."

TURNING back to coalition politics, the Likud backbencher says new elections are unlikely. But he does not expect the national unity government to last its four years. "I don't believe that the rotation agreement will be kept. Not that I'm accusing Shimon Peres of anything. I think he may want to keep the rotation deal with Shamir, but his party colleagues won't let him. I'm convinced that as we approach the rotation deadline, the government will fall."

Labour will bring things to such a pass that the Likud will have to quit; then we'll see a narrow government, comprising the left plus the National Religious Party, with Agudat Israel and Morasha jumping on that bandwagon, and Shas, after some hesitation over its commitment to the Likud, following suit."

Shitrit has been urging his party for more than a month to walk out now "while the going's good." If the Likud goes over to the opposition benches, it could build itself up as a real alternative to Labour for the next elections. "At the moment we are losing points to Labour in two directions. Some of our voters are shifting to Labour, and others are opting for the radical right - Tehiya and Kach.

"Our image has become blurred. Some of our ministers voted against the Lebanon withdrawal, others against the economic programme. I doubt whether that adds to our popularity. We can only restore our fortunes and our clear identity in opposition. I propose that we quit on our own terms, and not wait for Labour to dictate them".

THAT BRINGS Shitrit to his proposal for what he calls "civil rebellion" against the present electoral system. "If half a million of my fellow Israelis join me in signing petitions calling for electoral reform, we would see action and change!" His proposals include a presidential system, a written constitution and constituency regional elections "which means the accountability of the elected to the voters. At present no MK has any personal responsibility to the electorate, only to his party. Having MKs responsible to the electorate is how he would respond to extremism - "that will settle Kahana's hash."

A month ago Shitrit went on Israel TV with his electoral reform programme and has since been inundated with enthusiastic responses from all parts of the country and all kinds of people.

"All I need are \$100,000 to put a non-party organization together", he says. When asked where to contact him, he replies: "Write to Meir Shitrit, Yavne, Israel."

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ISRAEL

ISRAELI DRUSE SCHOLAR PUBLISHES CONTROVERSIAL THEORY ON ISLAM

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 12 Jul 85 pp 4-5

[Article by David Richardson]

[Text] LA ILAHA illallah muhammadun rasullullah.--There is but one God, Mohammed is the Apostle of God. This profession of faith or shahada is the core belief of Islam. Nine months ago, a young Israeli Druse scholar who, somewhat surprisingly, held the position of vice-president of the an-Nahah National University in Nablus, published a book challenging a basic element of that shahada. Mohammed, as portrayed in the Koran and in much of Islamic literature or accepted history, is probably a fabrication, a myth, he argued. Understandably, the young academic ran into opposition; but he did not expect the final sanction. Last May, the university, which in countless public statements and in its news letters makes such cogent, emotive pleas for academic freedom in the occupied territories, fired him for his theories on Islamic history.

Suleiman Bashir's story is not just that of another enfant terrible provoking the establishment and embarrassing his peers. His theories about the rise of Islam have fundamental implications not only for esoteric Islamic historiography and the handful of academics who specialize in this relatively young discipline, but for the way Moslems everywhere, and particularly the intellectuals among them, must come to look at themselves.

Bashir's penetrating criticisms of the Palestinian universities in the territories and the growing group of young intellectuals that has gathered around them cuts so close to the bone that few are willing to comment on his views. But it is also a peculiarly Israeli story--a young Druse, raised and educated in the Jewish state, who lives in East Jerusalem, regards himself as a cosmopolitan intellectual but who remains quietly apologetic about not having served in the IDF--for health reasons.

"ISLAM, it used to be said, grew up in the full light of history," wrote the renowned Arabic scholar Sir H.A.R. Gibb in his study, Mohammedanism. "Within a single lifetime that light has grown steadily dimmer. Under critical examination the foundations of the old tradition have dissolved into enigmas and hypotheses. The Koran emerges so far unscathed, and the bare historical framework survives."

Bashir's theories challenge and threaten to replace that "bare historical framework."

It was only with the advent of Christianity that Arabia began to emerge from its isolation onto the stage of world history. By the end of the 5th century CE, the Byzantine and Sassanian empires were waging wars to control the region. With their eventual decline, the notoriously warlike and recalcitrant tribes of Beduin and town-dwellers asserted their independence. At the beginning of the 7th century Arabia was a jumble of petty autonomies with no unifying authority.

It was against this background that Mohammed appeared, or as Bashir argues, "was invented, retroactively."

The accepted, traditional history of Islam affirms that Mohammed was born in the year 570 into one of the leading families of Mecca. His exceptionally heightened sense of social justice impelled him to criticize the iniquities of the city, which was then a prosperous and bustling station on the trade route between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean.

Ostracized, feared and hounded by the oligarchies of Mecca, Mohammed eventually fled to Medina in his celebrated flight, the Hejira, in 622. In Medina, he turned his small following into a political movement, of which the new religion of Islam was an integral and major part.

In the 10 years from the Hejira until his death in 632, Mohammed subdued Mecca and the surrounding tribes and saw his movement grow into a focus of "Arab-feeling." His successors almost immediately began to expand their influence, sweeping out of the hitherto isolated peninsula and spreading the word of the Prophet as they went.

Despite the brilliant military and political successes which took Islam into Egypt, Syria and Iraq and saw Arab armies at the entrance to India within 15 years of Mohammed's death, the new movement was ridden with secession and internal rivalries. By 660, the capital of the new Arab empire had shifted from Medina to Damascus, where the Ummayyad dynasty of caliphs had established themselves.

It was the Ummayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) who built the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque in Damascus. The Ummayyad dynasty collapsed in 750, to be succeeded eventually by the Abbasid caliphs, who established their capital in Baghdad in 762.

ISLAMIC STUDIES, the scientific investigation of the origins and history of Islam, are not yet a hundred years old. Ever since Ignaz Goldziher, a Hungarian Jew, published his study of the hadith, the oral lore which was the main vehicle for conveying the traditions about Mohammed and his teachings, in 1890, scholars have been aware that their research has been based largely on late and suspiciously partisan sources.

In 1977, two British researchers at Cambridge University, P. Crone and M. Cook, published Hagarism, an attempt to collect and review all the non-Islamic material as a method of establishing cross-references and independent sources for events in Arabia at the time of the rise of Islam. This included Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian and Jewish sources, but "their harvest was depressingly meagre," noted a colleague who participated in a colloquium on Islamic studies at the Hebrew University last week. (Incidentally, the title of the book is derived from the Byzantine term for the children of Hagar.)

Crone and Cook were furiously criticized in the academic press and elsewhere for their efforts, which challenged the axioms of Islam. So was another Cambridge scholar, J. Wansbrough, who published his reservations soon afterwards.

Suleiman Bashir has gone even further.

"WE HAVE no independent historical sources for the existence of Mohammed," says Bashir. "The only version of his life we have is Abbasid and they, of course, wanted to deny any legitimacy to the Ummayyads, who were after all so much closer to Mohammed's time. The earliest biography of Mohammed is Abbasid, which was written in the late 8th century, and there are three contradictory versions of that!"

Encouraged by his academic mentor, Prof. Meir Kister of the Hebrew University, Bashir set about obtaining some Ummayyad texts. A treasure trove of these texts is known to exist in the Great Mosque in Damascus, which is an Ummayyad structure, and researchers have by and large been denied access to them.

Using the good offices of An-Najah in Amman and the sympathy he was able to enlist in Damascus for a university in Israeli-occupied territory, Bashir eventually succeeded in obtaining photocopies of 250 early Ummayyad texts.

His study of the hadith, fables and incidents related in these early texts, led him to come up with what he calls "a new scheme of history."

"Islam arose against the background of the decline of the Byzantine empire. As the central authority crumbled, to be replaced by local principalities, Arab political and cultural independence began to surface. One aspect of this shaking off of foreign control was the sprouting of Arab Christian heresies from the accepted doctrine of the Byzantine Church. These heresies, which were particularly rife in the northern Hejaz region, are known as hanpeh or hanif in Arabic." (That term will become significant in a moment.)

"We know that it was Abd al-Malik who, at the end of the 7th century, began consolidating Moslem rule. He introduced Arabic for the first time as the standard language of the believers, erected the first major buildings, collated the Koran, and issued the first Arabic coins. Numismatic finds prior to his period of rule indicate that the people of the peninsula were not averse to using coins which bore the Byzantine cross.

"In this context, it is clear that Islam arose as a state religion, harnessed, moulded and probably distorted to serve the interests of the politicians in power at the time."

Active in Hejaz at the same time was another tribal leader, Mohammed ibn Hanafiya, "whose personal history bears an astonishing resemblance to that of the Prophet," says Bashir. The Abbasids later traced their legitimacy to rule to ibn Hanafiya.

From this and other evidence, Bashir concludes that what happened was the Arabization of many myths and traditions common in the region at the time.

"Islam was the religious expression of a national rebellion by Christian Arabs," he says. The Abbasids, for their own reasons, rewrote history to emphasize their connections to the Prophet and minimize the role of Ummayyads.

IN A LECTURE he delivered at the Hebrew University in December last year, Bashir said: "This distortion is expressed not only in the dispute and almost total confusion surrounding nearly every historical event or personality, but also in duplications in identities of people, events and places stretched over the first 50 years of the Arab millennium.

"There is a kernel of historical truth for the existence of Mohammed but the Abbasids projected this back, to detach it from the period of Abd al-Malik. In the process, the figure of Mohammed took on mythical proportions absorbing local and foreign fables, beliefs and traditions rife in the area at the time."

Academic reaction to Bashir's thesis has been predictably cautious. Few people have read his book, which so far is available only in Arabic, or have had an opportunity to study the Ummayyad texts at first hand. Some, notably Prof. Moshe Sharon of the Hebrew University, have enthusiastically embraced it. Others are only willing to say at this stage that his work is "serious" and "potentially explosive."

Recent archeological findings at Sde Boker and in the central Negev suggest that Jahaliya or pre-Islamic culture persisted into the 7th and 8th centuries, the time of Abd al-Malik. Prof. Yehuda Nevo, who presented these findings at last week's colloquium at the Hebrew University, supported Bashir's thesis in his paper, which he subtitled "The emergence of the Arab polity in Islam--a suggestion for reconstruction."

SULEIMAN BASHIR was born in the Galilee Druse village of Mrar in 1947. After studying Middle Eastern studies and classical Islam at the Hebrew University, he went to London University, where he wrote his doctoral thesis on the beginnings of the Arab Communist parties. Most of the early Arab Communists were Jews, he notes--"there were hardly any others."

In 1976 he returned and took up a position at Birzeit University. After teaching modern history for two years, he was offered a position at an-Najah in Nablus, which was rapidly expanding to become the largest Palestinian university in the area.

It was during this period that Bashir began to return to classical Islam, and renewed his contacts with his former professors, chief among them Kister.

Bashir ran afoul of the establishment in the territories in 1980, when he published a booklet in Arabic on "The Roots of the Jordanian Option." The essay, based on a review of sources in the Zionist Archives, argued that even prior to the Peel Commission's recommendations in 1937 to partition Palestine, there were Arabs who favoured a solution based on annexing Arab-populated areas to the Hashemite kingdom. He also named several prominent local people and families who had been in the pay of the Zionists.

The study so outraged the Jordanian establishment that Crown Prince Hassan has reportedly provided another young local historian with a stipend in England to research the matter and refute Bashir's thesis.

After a period as director of an-Najah's Research and Documentation Centre, Bashir was offered the position of vice-president in charge of academic affairs.

"To this day I do not know why I was offered such a senior position," he says. "I was always regarded as an Israeli Druse, something of an outsider. I suspect that there was something of a political motive in the appointment, perhaps an attempt to bury me with administrative work and prevent me from continuing with my academic research, which was controversial and problematic for the university."

It is a strange reflection on Israel's administration of the territories that at the same time as an Israeli Druse took up a senior position at the largest, and one of the most nationalistic universities in the West Bank, an Israeli Druse officer was serving as the appointed mayor of the same town, Nablus. The staff officer in charge of education in the Civil Administration was also a Druse--in fact, Bashir's cousin.

IN OCTOBER last year, Bashir published, at his own expense, his green-covered review of the Ummayyad literature based on the 250 documents the Syrian government had allowed the an-Najah Research and Documentation Centre to copy. Although copies of the study, *An Introduction to the Other History - Towards a New Reading of Islamic Tradition*, were circulating in the West Bank and Bashir himself had given two copies to the Moslem Brotherhood in Nablus for review, there was no immediate outcry. But Bashir knew he was being provocative: no one in East Jerusalem was willing to publish the book.

In April this year, tension at an-Najah increased as the various student factions prepared for their internal elections. The Moslem Brotherhood on the campus raised the flag of the defence of Islam; and in Friday prayers at a mosque near

the university the sheikh began to denounce "the *hartaka*, the heresy in the faculty of history."

Students began picketing Bashir's office; slogans denouncing him as a "Zionist" were scrawled on the walls; and eventually the president of the university, Dr. Munzer Salah, summoned him and told him that the university had no choice but to dismiss him.

"He told me it was because of the book, that it was *fitna*, a schism which negated the basis of the Islamic faith," recalls Bashir. "He said that this was not the time to publish this kind of thing. The truth is that he tried to defend me, but in the end his is a political position."

Bashir rejected the attempts of the leftists on campus who wanted to make a *cause célèbre* of his case. "I have no time for politicians, and the left is as dogmatic as the religious fundamentalists."

Some of his colleagues among the younger and Western-trained academics at the West Bank universities privately expressed their support for him, but none came out publicly on his behalf. Now, he is preparing to leave the country, hopefully to receive a grant as a scholar in residence at an American university, where he plans to translate his book into English and continue his study of the Ummayyad sources.

BASHIR'S BITTER public attack on the universities in the West Bank has already been seized on by those right-wing circles in Israel that have for years argued that these institutions, which grew up under Israeli rule, are more concerned with Palestinian nationalism than with producing decent graduates. But he refuses to soften his criticism and blames Israel for much of what is wrong.

"Universities on the West Bank are shot through with politics. The academics have given up their independence. Ostensibly academic appointments are carefully managed to reflect the balance of forces within the PLO outside. Once that happens, teachers are obligated, students make demands, because they

are members of the same movement, and results are adjusted accordingly. Any semblance of academic quality just disappears."

Bashir and his Jerusalem-born wife Lilian, who teaches English at Birzeit, have been intimidated. Their apartment in the Nusseibeh housing project in Beit Hanina has a steel door.

"There have been pressures," he acknowledges. "Sometimes terrorism is not someone putting a gun to your head but something in the atmosphere, someone offering you 'advice.'"

"I was constantly told that 'Now is not the time,' but when is the time? I realize now that what I tried to do at the universities in the West Bank was to correct the past from a present which is suffering from a similar malaise of distortion, hyperbole and lack of integrity."

Suleiman Bashir, an Israeli Druse, has lost his fight in the West Bank, where he never belonged in the first place. Like so many of his contemporaries among Israel's minorities, he is not sure where he belongs anyway; but he is bent on making a niche for himself in a world which he himself has proven recognizes few borders — academic research. □

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KUWAIT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER DISCUSSES ECONOMIC, POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 18 Aug 85 p 5

[Article: "The Deputy Dr Ahmad al-Rab'i, in a Press Interview: During the Attack on the Emir, the Government Acted Calmly"]

[Text] The Lebanese magazine AL-SAYYAD, which comes out in London, held a lengthy meeting with the deputy Dr Ahmad al-Rab'i in which he talked about Kuwaiti domestic issues, starting with the democratic atmosphere, proceeding through the al-Manakh crisis and ending with the spread of terrorism.

Deputy al-Rab'i considers that the threat to democracy in Kuwait is a dual one -- a domestic threat and a foreign one, with each opposed to democracy. However, he stresses that these anti-democratic forces have now become isolated and minor.

When he talks about the al-Manakh crisis, Dr al-Rab'i believes that what happened was an economic crisis, not an economic collapse.

Concerning terrorism, Deputy al-Rab'i states that the terrorism to which Kuwait has been subjected is imported and that the Kuwaitis, after the incident of the attack on the emir's motorcade, have proved that there is true unity among themselves and have shown themselves to be a people who rally around their political leadership.

When Huda al-Husayni held the meeting with Deputy al-Rab'i, she prefaced it with these words:

"When Dr Ahmad al-Rab'i declared that he had decided to run as a candidate just 2 months before the date of the elections, his friends were surprised by the news, and others considered it unlikely that he would win. His political campaign began with emphasis on the struggle against tribalism and religious zealotry, considering it a threat endangering the future of Kuwait, and at the same time, along with the Democratic Grouping, it presented a specific election program for facing the economic problems. Al-Rab'i's popularity grew, he won in the elections and he has retained a distinctive voice in the National Assembly. Dr Ahmad al-Rab'i denies that he is new to the political scene in Kuwait. One of his teachers mentioned to me that he

has been 'engaged' in politics since the time he was a pupil and that the teachers would ignore his latenesses at school and would encourage him. From Kuwait al-Rab'i traveled to Beirut and lived there before traveling to America to complete his specialization in Islamic studies. Some Kuwaitis say that al-Rab'i acquired special popularity when the chairman of the board of the newspaper AL-WATAN 'rented out' his daily column to Ahmad al-Rab'i during the summer vacation last year, and al-Rab'i proceeded to write about everything facing the Kuwaiti citizens in the details of their daily life. In his conversation with AL-SAYYAD, al-Rab'i denied that the al-Manakh crisis and the economic collapse were behind the Democratic Grouping's accession to the National Assembly, and he considered it untrue that Kuwait was suffering from economic collapse. Rather, 'there is an economic crisis,' and he said that the people who were bidding over the democratic forces in the National Assembly and considering them deficient in solving the economic problem 'were years ahead of us but did not solve the problem.' He stressed that the security crises in Kuwait were imported ones, and that the Kuwaiti people would not collapse as easily as some people imagined.

[Question] It is said that you came to the National Assembly because of the al-Manakh crisis and the economic collapse. What is your answer?

[Answer] First of all some notions on al-Manakh and the economic collapse must be corrected. There is a big difference between what we call the al-Manakh crisis and the statement that there is an economic collapse. Kuwait basically depends on petroleum, as far as its economic situation goes, and as long as the petroleum market is stable or at least is not facing real problems, it is hard for us to talk about economic collapse. Leaving that aside, it is a crisis, not a collapse, and its cause is the al-Manakh crisis. However, one cannot call it an economic catastrophe. This problem in my opinion can be transcended with time.

As to whether we came in because of al-Manakh, first of all we are not new on the stage. That is, the democratic forces in this country are not new. It was no surprise to people who know the nature of the social, political and economic situation in Kuwait that it should "be discovered" that we have returned. We were not absent in the first place. We were present, but we were not in parliament; that is the main difference.

As to why we returned -- and I have many reservations about the word "we returned" -- the reasons are numerous. It is clear, and I say it most modestly, that our absence from parliament was one of the problems which the parliamentary experience in Kuwait was facing, because the absence of a political force that has played a great role since independence in the development of Kuwaiti society has of necessity led to a sort of disruption in the condition of the political forces and their relationship to the democratic process. We returned because we presented the alternative program for a group of economic, social and political problems in Kuwaiti society. Al-Manakh is one of the major important issues but it is not the first and last one. We came because we presented a specific electoral program for facing a group of problems. As to the partisanship which has taken place in our regard, it has not been partisanship toward persons like Ahmad al-Rab'i, Ahmad al-Khatib or so-and-so. Rather, it has been partisanship toward the notion

of reform which the Kuwaitis want. I believe that it is obvious, concerning the problems which the country has faced in recent years -- it has been obvious that there is great difficulty in solving them in the absence of the democratic and national forces, which have no interest except to solve these problems, because they are not a party to the economic crisis and also are not benefiting from or harmed by this crisis.

[Question] It has been said, concerning the solution you are raising, that the government will not interfere and will leave you to advocate a solution to the economic problems, and that you will not succeed. Here several months have gone by you and you have not done anything.

[Answer] First of all, this record is being played over nowadays to a large degree and there is extensive reiteration of this idea, which holds "Where is the assembly? Why hasn't the assembly solved the problem?" It is as if they are talking about a traffic problem or a problem of a shortage in a type of food commodity. One can pause to consider this sort of problem and discuss it in 3 or 4 months, but the al-Manakh problem is not just economic; it is an economic problem, a political decisionmaking problem, a problem of the distribution of wealth, and a basic problem which must be reviewed. For example, in whose interests are economic and social decisions being made? Is it in the interests of the majority in the Kuwaiti society or in the interests of the minority? Does the law enjoy respect in this society or can any problem of human society be solved without law or in the manner of "Let us break the law and wait, let another law come to save us from the previous one?" In fact, the issue of al-Manakh is not the cause of the economic problem; rather, its cause was certain speculation in stock. A large group of factors have interacted. Unless there is a new spirit in dealing with the issues of Kuwaiti society, the al-Manakh problem will not be solved if it is not taken into consideration that the solution to the problems of human societies does not come about by chance, does not come about by making the interests of the minority prevail at the expense of the majority, and does not come about through the failure to respect the law, but rather that it is necessary to agree on basic principles for administering the affairs of human societies, of which Kuwaiti society is one, and that it will be possible to find our way to solving what is called the al-Manakh crisis in the light of that.

In my opinion, there is no single Manakh, but a group of Manakhs, and what is a Manakh as far as people who are involved in stocks go is another Manakh as far as the people who are waiting their turn to receive housing are concerned. These people have a Manakh of their own. The existence of a home, a place and a roof under which they can shelter themselves, themselves and their families, is the first requirement as far as the society in Kuwait goes. As far as other people go, the crisis in education is another Manakh, not just the al-Manakh in the meaning that has become spread about in Kuwaiti society and the Arab world, and outside it.

Moreover, the al-Manakh problem is unique for its kind. In our Kuwaiti society we have not been acquainted with a problem similar to it so that we could compare how we managed to overcome the first al-Manakh problem. There is no Manakh problem in this sense in any other country in the world. In my

opinion such a tremendous sum of money had not previously become accumulated in the hands of a small group of people during a short period of time at a certain gambling table called the al-Manakh crisis in human history. Consequently there has been no corresponding experience. It is as if we were to say "Let us see how America solved the 'Wall Street' problem in 1929." That is another problem, connected to the crisis of an American economy, and was reflected on the crisis of the American securities market. As regards what has happened in Kuwait, there is no relationship between the securities market and the economy where we should say, "Let us solve the former problem so that the latter one may be solved." Consequently we are faced with a complex problem on the one hand, a problem where it is not enough for the government or anyone to say "The ball is now in the National Assembly's court and the National Assembly has not solved the problem." The Kuwaiti people are now aware of this issue. There are people who are trying to make the assembly bear the responsibility in full in an attempt to implicate it, because the Kuwaiti National Assembly, as is well known, or at least as the Kuwaitis have agreed, is a strong council which is equal to its responsibility, and the style of implicating it by going in by the back door of what is called the al-Manakh crisis will fail. It is clear that there is a campaign on the part of this sort of council and in people's gatherings when they keep saying, "Where is the National Assembly? Why hasn't it solved the problem? We had hopes in it, but our hopes have been dashed." I believe that this talk is not proper. The al-Manakh problem is not a transitory simple one whose solution is in our hands. Otherwise, we would have solved it. The problem is that the people who are bidding over us had an opportunity to do so for years and nonetheless did not solve this problem.

[Question] What is the danger threatening democracy in Kuwait? Is the democracy here complete?

[Answer] When we talk about democracy, we are talking about a relative situation. We can say that Kuwaiti democracy is complete if we compare it with what is going on around us. Unfortunately, with the deterioration in Arab conditions every day, we are now making a comparison with something worse, not something better, and are now stating that we are in an excellent situation, because the others are in a bad situation, while we ought to be saying we are in a bad situation because the others are in a better one. There are very broad relative freedoms. There is freedom of the press to an excellent degree. There is freedom of assembly and there is freedom of political clubs. Of course we do not yet have political parties, but there is quite an adequate liberal spirit in Kuwaiti society. Within the balances and forces surrounding us in the Arab situation and the international situation, I believe that it is adequate to a substantial degree.

It is true that we do not have a complete democracy. Without the abrogation of the law on assemblies, complete democracy will not exist. Without the grant of permission for political parties, complete democracy will not exist. Without the development of the constitution as the constitution itself has stipulated, since it was set out in a specific society, and a limb of a specific body in Kuwaiti society, and has stipulated in effect that the constitution should be developed along with the development in Kuwaiti society, what has happened is that Kuwaiti society has developed and the constitution has remained as it is.

As to the threat to democracy, that is a dual one, a domestic threat and a foreign one. The foreign threat assumes form from there being a situation in which liberalization and general freedoms exist; strong cohesion in the domestic front constitutes a direct threat because it constitutes an alternative, constitutes a model, and others can point and wonder why they are not like Kuwait. Kuwait does not represent the model situation, but its situation is much better than those of numerous countries. That is the foreign threat. The domestic threat, as in all human societies, there are enemies of democracy and in my opinion the great interests and monopolies do not have an interest in democracy. The parasites in Kuwaiti society, that is, the group of people who live on real estate speculations and imports and exports and do not have any serious ideas in their mind on developing even their own economic activity and turning it into productive activity, this group assuredly hates democracy, and there are the forces whose interests have been harmed by the Kuwaiti citizen's starting to defend his rights and prevent theft. Assuredly these forces are harmed by democracy, and there are people who dream of going back to the Kuwait of the forties and fifties, when public money was abandoned; there assuredly are forces which dream of going back to this situation. However, I believe that they have become isolated and small, and we hope that they will remain at this magnitude.

[Question] Are you in favor of granting freedom to parties?

[Answer] Of course. However, the problem is that the notion of parties in the Arab world has become frightening to people, in view of the Lebanese experience, for example. To some officials, the Lebanese experience has become connected to the phrase "See what has happened to Lebanon." They directly connect what has happened in Lebanon to political parties, while what has happened in Lebanon or elsewhere is that on some occasions the political party has not been a political party in the political sense but a party for a specific group or a specific faction and has assumed the form of a party, but is not a party which has been able to transcend all factional, religious and racial groupings. The problem also is that the idea of parties has become connected to military coups in the Arab world, which are odious situations, and when people remember them they remember all the repression, torture and crimes which have been committed along with them. The reason is that all of these parties sought to reach power by means of tanks and cannons as soon as possible in order to beat out the other parties. The idea of parties has become loathesome to people, linked to blood and violence, though other models exist. All the advanced countries in the world are strong and civilized because they are based on a party system lacking violence and murder, even in the third world, such as the Indian experience, which is advanced with respect to the issue of parties, party freedom and elections on party bases. Moreover, it is difficult to talk about democracy without parties. It remains a big flaw in any democracy to be without parties. However, it is this distorted picture of parties among people, which they have the right to, that makes talking about supporting parties largely unacceptable.

[Question] What security measures, that is, what type of security measures, are you in favor of?

[Answer] I am in favor of any security measure which will protect the country, but I would like to distinguish between security and terrorism. Security means your natural right to protect your security as a society from the totality of threats surrounding you, albeit within the limits of the law, within the limits of the commitment to human rights, and within the commitment to Kuwait's international reputation. Kuwait is one of the few countries in the world whose name is not included in the lists of countries which practice political imprisonment. We would like to maintain this situation. We do not want to oppress anyone, whether he is Kuwaiti or not, in Kuwait, on grounds of security. We do not want to deport anyone from the country without cause, in the name of security alone. However, we are in favor of force for maintaining security.

In spite of all that, a question remains on the subject of security, which many people abroad do not pay attention to; the threat to Kuwaiti security is terrorism. Terrorism in Kuwait is imported terrorism, the settlement of scores between countries. Therefore we always find that certain countries are behind the acts of violence or political terrorism in Kuwait. This situation, with all its negative features, is comforting to us on grounds that it is not Kuwaitis who are fighting Kuwaitis. For example, we can say that security in Lebanon is like a disaster, because the Lebanese are fighting Lebanese, of course along with the presence of other forces. We can say that the situation in Cyprus is bad because the Turkish Cypriots are fighting the Greek Cypriots. In Kuwait there is no civil war, which is a good thing, and the unity of the Kuwaitis must be preserved. Political terrorism always comes from abroad, in the form of the settlement of scores between regimes or between their citizens in Kuwait, or a form of conspiracy aimed at provocation.

What happened after the incident of the attack on the emir is that the forces that were behind the incident were surprised to see that Kuwait's situation was not volatile, as they had imagined, where chaos would occur and the Kuwaitis would revolt. The opposite was the case. All the Kuwaitis rallied together around the emir and the forces were taken by surprise as they did not know that the basis of this solidarity was the climate of freedom. There are people in Kuwait who say that the cause of our problems is freedom, like the erroneous idea which holds that the cause of Lebanon's problems is Lebanese democracy, although there is absolutely no connection; Kuwaiti society is not Lebanese society, and there are big differences. Therefore it is necessary to stress that the security crises in Kuwait are imported ones and the Kuwaitis have openly established, after the incident of the emir, that there is real unity among themselves. Indeed, they have manifested themselves as a people who rally around their political leadership, which is a good thing.

[Question] Is Kuwait safe now?

[Answer] Yes. I believe that we have emerged from the experience of the attack on the emir much stronger than before, domestically and abroad. We have reviewed some of our security accounts on the one hand and on the other we have proved to others that we are really united and it is not a simple matter for us to be apt to collapse. Even the direct official reactions

after the incident were quiet to a degree which struck many people. If what happened had happened in another country, the political authorities would have acted in a stupid or excitable manner. However, that did not happen at all in Kuwait. Rather, the authorities acted with awareness and calm, the media presented the issue as it was exactly, without adding or subtracting, and in a few hours the emir was on television, telling people "Here I am and there is no problem."

[Question] What would you classify yourself as, leftist, socialist or what?

[Answer] These words are expressions. Some time ago I wrote that a person who is a leftist in France might be a rightist in Chile or vice versa. The terms rightist or leftist are related to the nature of the political structure of the system. As far as we in Kuwait are concerned, we are not living under the aegis of a fascist or terrorist system; rather, we are living under the aegis of a system of freedoms in which freedoms in general are guaranteed, and we believe that there are great possibilities for sound democratic development in the society and in parliament. It is enough that we have held free elections and we are members of parliament. We have sworn to protect the institutions and we feel that we are pursuing these convictions. We believe that things are progressing in a good manner. In addition, there is no such severe class difference in Kuwait. Without a doubt there are social grievances and there is maldistribution of wealth to a certain extent in Kuwait, and we constantly say so, inside and outside parliament. We belong to the classes of people with limited incomes more than to the class of people with high incomes. We always advocate that political decisions should be in favor of the middle and limited income classes, and reach consensus over a broad democratic national reform program, which could be called leftist in Kuwait. Consequently I am a leftist in the Kuwaiti manner.

[Question] Since the Gulf Cooperation Council was proclaimed, it has been noted that chauvinism has increased in every Gulf country, and Saudization and Kuwaitization have emerged to oppose us. What is the reason for that?

[Answer] What you call chauvinism I call nationalism. The problem does not just lie in Saudization, Kuwaitization or Qatarization. The problem appears even in "gulfification." In spite of my conviction that there are common characteristics and there are family, clan and social relations and a rapprochement in the context of political, economic and social construction among the countries of the Gulf, this poetic exaggeration in talking about "the history of the independent Gulf" or talking about the Gulf as something totally distinct from the world or Gulf civilization is not valid. There is no distinctive Gulf civilization in reality. In addition, this Gulf exaggeration reflects itself in each country in isolation, making the issue more complicated. We find for example that a given folk art is Kuwaiti art, not Saudi art or Gulf art, common similar features or common history notwithstanding. However, a sort of upset national view has come about in reality, and this in turn reflects political crisis in the nature of the balances of forces among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. This is something that has been established.

What I can say is that our problem now is the problem of the phenomenon of oil. In the past the language brought Arabs together and common history brought them together. Now there are Arabs of a specific type who are brought together by oil, and their common characteristic is oil. There are rich Arabs and poor Arabs. The mere fact that you are a rich Arab means that you have oil and that you are distinguished by special characteristics. For example, you can go on a trip anytime. It also means a combination of particular traits in this oil personality. There are poor Arabs, if we take Yemen while still talking about the Gulf Cooperation Council. Yemen is an island that is very close by, but that does not keep it from being a poor country, and no one doubts that it is an Arab country. We observe that the Arabs who do not have oil work, under difficult circumstances, for the oil Arabs. In reality, circumstances have newly arisen as a result of the phenomenon of oil which it had been assumed would play a positive role in the development of Arab society. I made that statement awhile ago in the National Assembly, in the course of the discussion of the budget for Kuwait's aid to the Gulf countries. I said that if we had been thinking in another manner we would have made an Arab Marshall Plan as America did with Western Europe after World War Two. Now why don't these tremendous financial resources which are at the disposal of the oil Arabs contribute to the rebuilding of the needy Arab Gulf countries and carry out a project which would qualify these poor countries to face coming problems, especially since the Arab world is now facing a problem of bread, especially since all the world is venturing on a famine as a result of the control over wheat, and we have not thought up to this moment, in spite of the existence of all this money, how we will guarantee our existence in terms of food?

[Question] Don't you feel that you in Kuwait are so engrossed in the details of your Kuwaiti causes that Kuwaiti society has become alienated from the problems and wars that are going on in the area?

[Answer] The issue in my opinion is not alienation from the region's concerns and wars. The problem can be attributed to the nature of the population structure in Kuwaiti society. The Kuwaitis make up about 38 percent of the total population, and this percentage is dropping every year. This idea is the root of the question that has been posed, which is the Kuwaitis' feeling that they with time will constitute the minority, that is, that one is threatened.

[Question] There are people who bring up the application of Islamic law to solve the al-Manakh crisis. They recommend that their ideas be presented in the form of a draft to the National Assembly; would you agree to such a draft?

[Answer] First, the subject of Islamic law must be separate from the realm of emotions so that it may deal with reality. Talking about Islamic law in this way, without details, will lead to a dangerous result, and this has happened in more than one Arab country. In Iran all questions are raised in consideration of what the Islamic solution is, but as a result matters have become complicated. In the Sudan, Ja'far Numayri came and proposed Islamic law and committed a group of violations in the name of Islamic law. In Egypt, Anwar al-Sadat raised the slogan of "Science and faith" and talk about

applying Islamic law started. I believe that the people who raise the issue of Islamic law must respect Islamic law, first of all, and respect their own minds, second of all, and not raise the question of applying Islamic law on the basis that that is a slogan for political struggle. In that case, it will be more harmful than beneficial. Perhaps when the ordinary man in the street finds that erroneous practices are being committed in the name of Islam, he will rebel and say that the problem is in Islam, and is not a problem of erroneous methods. In reality we are exposing Islam to a group of dangers by presenting the question of Islamic law in a naive way. We are not against talking about an Islamic economy, but what do you mean by it? Let us define the details and let us define the reforms and what the alternatives are that are relevant in a world such as the world of today, a world which depends on banks, on financial markets, and on international relations; these newly created facts did not exist when Islamic law was first applied. There are newly created conditions in the world now which we must face with an Islamic mentality, on the one hand, but with a modern mentality and the mentality of today, without getting lost in the problem that has newly arisen.

What is happening nowadays is that Islamic law is being raised as a subject of a political premise, but in practice I do not consider that there are serious solutions for solving the al-Manakh problem based on the Islamic solution.

What is the Islamic solution? It states, most briefly, that there should be no interest. Is Kuwaiti society prepared to eliminate interest now?

I will agree, and I am the first person who will stand alongside the Islamic solution, if it assumes this nature, but that is an ideal solution at this moment, where we should talk, now that economic matters have become complicated, of a solution which will eliminate all bank interest at once. I believe that that will create a new problem. Therefore, in my opinion, it is necessary to refrain from using Islamic law in solving problems of this type, because what is happening is that there are people who jump quickly onto the cart although they do not have any connection with Islamic law, and there are perhaps people who say, "Let us solve the problem of the al-Manakh crisis through Islamic law, that is, let us eliminate interest," and because they are harmed by this interest, they will jump onto the first horse and say "I am an adherent of Islamic law." Therefore it is a mistake to push Islamic law into such areas.

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OMAN

GREATER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 17-23 Aug 85 p 27

[Article: "National Sector Constitutes Majority in 55-Member Council; Qabus Tells Members of Oman's Consultative Council, 'You are the Liaison between Government and Citizens To Further Their Cooperation'"]

[Text] The establishment of the State Consultative Council in the Sultanate of Oman constitutes a leading experiment in cooperation and solidarity between the government sector and the national sector. The success achieved by the council in performing its duties led to increasing its members from 45 to 55. This was done to expand and consolidate the foundation of the people's participation in the process of expressing their opinions about the government's efforts to implement its plans to achieve progress in the country's economic and social development.

Council members represent both the government and national sectors. They are chosen from among experts and well-informed people who represent all sectors. When it was first established the council had 45 members: 17 represented the government sector, and 28 represented the national sector. On 30 October 1984 Sultan Qabus issued a royal decree increasing the number of council members to 55. This was done to enhance and strengthen that experiment. It was done because the sultan wanted to expand the participatory framework in the decision making and advisory processes. In accordance with that decree, new council members were chosen: the number of government sector representatives rose to 19, and the number of national sector representatives rose to 36.

That decree reflected Sultan Qabus's wishes to increase citizens' participation in the council's activities. It also reflected his special interest in developing and enhancing the existing cooperation between the council and government. Such cooperation would enable the government to carry out its responsibilities in a manner that would strengthen its ability to achieve the objectives that are being sought from the development effort.

Sultan Qabus opened the council's first session on 3 November 1981. He delivered a significant, historical speech on that occasion, defining the council's functions and responsibilities and urging council members to carry out the tasks and duties that were entrusted to them so that the council can fulfill the noble objectives for which it was established. Sultan Qabus urged council members to

let the council become a vital place where people's opinions can interact and become integrated to reflect the total cooperation between government and citizens.

The selection of deputy ministers in the ministries that are concerned with economic and social development was made on a scientific basis. They are the ones who assume the basic responsibilities in their ministries since they serve as liaison between the ministers and the various executive agencies within those ministries. Accordingly, their ability to make judgments on development requirements and to determine development priorities within the council is considerable. Also, the fact that they were selected as members of the council means that Oman's leaders have decided to steer all efforts toward effecting a strong economic development so that Omani citizens can begin to see its positive effects soon.

Other individuals were chosen to serve on the council because they were men of thought and action: they were natural products of Omani society. These were men who had gained wisdom from their experiences and who had thus earned the confidence of people because they were well-informed and gave sound advice. Oman's leaders chose such people from among men in government, in the regions and in the private sector so as to bring together within the council all the forces that can effect progress in the country's economic and social development. The essence of those opinions that represent broad sectors of society and affect them would then be filed and presented.

Leaders saw to it that the national sector have a majority in the council. Those members represent in the council different areas of the country. Citizens' wishes and needs can thus be taken into account when the country's economic and social policies are developed.

The makeup of the council, as described above, reflects the permanent organic link between the council, as an agency that sets forth its opinions and takes part in making economic and social decisions, and the material reality of Oman. The fact that council members also serve in their ministries, projects and in various positions in the districts allows them to constitute a strong, continuing link between the council and government. Consequently, coordination between the council and government is based on a scientific method for dealing with problems that develop when economic and social development plans are applied.

The council assumes the responsibility of looking into economic and social development programs. It helps the government draw up development programs, follow up on the implementation of projects in development plans and overcome obstacles that hinder program implementation. In addition, the council also shares its opinions on the country's economic and social development. The council's chairman relays the council's recommendations to the country's monarch. The council is authorized to express its opinions on laws that are being issued and on the government's development policy in general, and it is authorized to make recommendations in that regard. It also looks into the difficulties facing the private sector and makes recommendations for overcoming those difficulties.

The council meets in regular session four times a year. Four permanent committees have been formed in the council. They are the legal committee, the economic committee, the services committee and the utilities committee.

Sultan Qabus's address at the opening of the council's second session late in 1984 was tantamount to a comprehensive and integrated plan of action for the coming stage. It is a stage that will require closer efforts to enrich the development process. The sultan's address placed emphasis on the significant role the council can play to advance the efforts that are being made for the country's development. Sultan Qabus explained the extent of the council's responsibility to continue making progress and taking more steps to achieve prosperity and wealth for the citizens of Oman.

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OMAN

RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEYED

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 26 Jul 85 p 57

[Article: The Sultanate of Oman after the First and Second 5-Year Plans: Oil Will Not Continue To Be the Only Source of Production"]

[Text] The location of the Sultanate of Oman has been a geographical as well as a strategic factor that strengthened the country's position as a trading partner with the countries of the world. It may even have been the foundation or the cornerstone for its historical fame in that regard.

Although oil did introduce significant changes in the sultanate's economic life and did continue for a long time to be the principal source of revenue for the country, new plans did not ignore the possibility that various economic, industrial and agricultural projects could benefit the country. Re-exporting goods that are not related to the oil industry emerged as an activity. All this has the effect of strengthening production sectors so that oil would not remain the first and foremost source of revenue for the country. At any rate, the Sultanate of Oman is located on an international trade route or what was called the Spice Route.

After the progress that Sultan Qabus achieved for the country, the Sultanate of Oman was able to maintain and to strengthen its trade position, particularly after oil was discovered in the country. The discovery of oil in Oman stimulated economic growth in the country.

During the years of the first and second 5-Year plans a large number of infrastructure projects was completed. These infrastructure projects contributed significantly to the growth of the trade sector. For example, the volume of goods unloaded at the port of Qabus rose from 71,000 tons in 1970 to 1,623,000 tons in 1980. In other words, the volume of goods unloaded at the port grew 23 times. The length of asphalt paved roads also grew from 10 kilometers in 1970 to 2,142 kilometers in 1980. That is, more than 214 times. The government has continued to shore up the country's infrastructure. By 1983, for example, there were 3,222 kilometers of asphalt paved roads in the country. The sultanate's GNP at current prices realized a high rate of growth during the years of the first 5-Year plan. In 1980 the GNP amounted to 1.823 billion Omani riyals, compared to 724 million Omani riyals in 1975. This was an increase of 1.099 billion Omani riyals or a 151.8 percent increase by the end of the 5 years. It meant an annual

average growth rate of 20.3 percent. This significant increase in the GNP was achieved as a result of the increase in income generated by the principal sector, which is oil. Oman began exporting oil in 1967, and revenues from oil grew by about 754 million Omani riyals; that is a 68.6 percent rate of growth.

Revenue estimates for 1983 indicated that the GNP amounted to 2.7413 billion Omani riyals, compared to 2.6097 billion riyals in 1982. That was an increase of 131.6 million Omani riyals and a 5 percent rate of growth.

From 1970 to 1985 the Sultanate of Oman has had no difficulty marketing the oil, dates, fish and fresh fruits it produces. Nor has it had any difficulty re-exporting goods to foreign markets.

As a result of all these factors collectively, it becomes evident that the trade sector's contribution to the GNP in 1983 was 303 million Omani riyals. In 1975 the trade sector's contribution to the GNP was 38.50 million Omani riyals.

The number of registered corporations and firms engaged in trade rose from 1,106 in 1975 to 10,963 by the end of 1983. Their capital amounted to 160.911 billion Omani riyals.

Because Sultan Qabus believes in the importance of the trade sector, Oman's Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established in 1973, and Oman's Ministry of Trade and Industry was established in 1974.

The sultanate is trying to encourage foreign investments in the country. To that end a law was enacted in 1974 to give all investors access to investments in the country. It put into effect Oman's open door policy to the outside world. Oman is encouraging investments in all areas to improve the national economy. Oman wants to bring foreign experts into the country so it can benefit from their expertise. Efforts are also being made to provide a suitable and an encouraging climate to investors, be they Arabs or foreigners. These efforts manifested themselves in incentives provided for in the law to encourage foreign investments. They may be summarized as follows:

1. The state is making an effort to subsidize production projects in the fields of agriculture, fish resources, industry, mining and quarries. The state offered industries in those areas up to 135 million Omani riyals in financial subsidies in the form of interest-free loans or grants. Besides, these industrial projects are exempt from income tax.
2. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has prepared economic feasibility studies for a number of projects because it wishes to offer industrial projects more favorable conditions.
3. The 1978 law that regulates and encourages industry provides tax exemptions and benefits to industrial projects that foreign capital has contributed to. The law stipulates that "Companies that contribute to the development of the national economy and whose paid capital exceeds 100,000 Omani riyals may be exempted from income tax by decree from the minister of trade and industry for a period of 5 years from the date of their establishment. That period of exemption from income tax may be extended for another period, not to exceed 5 more years."

4. Foreign investors may reduce taxes on returns from their investments if their projects are jointly established with national capital.

5. Foreign investments are exempted from income tax for 5 years if their activities pertain to industry, agriculture and fishing.

6. Tax exemptions are granted for national considerations in accordance with the Sultan's Decree Number 47 for 1981.

As far as Oman's foreign trade is concerned, several facts become evident when the sultanate's balance of trade with the other countries of the world is analyzed.

First, there was a surplus in the balance of trade from 1971 to 1983. This is a healthy phenomenon. The sultanate may utilize that surplus to purchase capital goods and to move the development process forward.

Second, the sultanate's imports rose from 790.1 million Omani riyals in 1981 to 860.9 million riyals in 1983. This is due to a higher standard of living in the country and to increased consumption.

Third, the sultanate's oil exports rose noticeably. In 1971 Oman's oil exports amounted to 87.6 million Omani riyals; in 1983 they rose to 1.3466 billion riyals. In other words, they grew more than 15 times. This is because oil prices rose, and the quantities of oil exported increased.

Fourth, the sultanate has been re-exporting a number of goods. This is due to the country's economic prosperity and to the fact that the country's infra-structures have been completed. Thus, the value of re-exported goods rose from zero to 110 million Omani riyals in 1983.

Fifth, the value of exports other than oil rose from 400,000 Omani riyals in 1971 to 10.7 million riyals. This is an increase of more than 26 times, and it is due to the fact that the government has been encouraging fishermen, farmers and others as well.

Sixth, exports other than oil products rose from 28.898 million tons of goods in 1982 to 36.112 million tons of goods in 1983. This is an increase of 29.1 percent. Excluding commodities, the value of exports other than oil exports amounted to 10.705 million Omani riyals in 1983. That was a 37 percent increase over 1982. These exports include fresh fruits and vegetables, dry dates, fish, tobacco, flour, copper, etc.

It is worth noting that for the first time in its history the sultanate was able to export pure copper in 1983-1984. The value of that copper amounted to 7 million riyals.

Seventh, the value of re-exported goods in 1983 amounted to 110.010 million riyals. This was a slight increase over 1982. Re-exported goods include food, animals, beverages, tobacco, mineral fuel, lubricating materials, chemicals, manufactured materials, equipment, transportation machinery and other goods.

The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, India, Jordan and other countries are among the most important countries purchasing goods other than oil exported by the sultanate in 1983. As far as oil exports are concerned, the countries that purchased crude oil from Oman were Japan, the Netherlands, West Germany, Singapore, Taiwan, France and other countries.

In 1983 the value of the sultanate's imports amounted to about 860.9 million Omani riyals. That was a 7.06 percent drop from 1982 imports, which amounted to 926.5 million Omani riyals. There are several reasons for this decline in imports. One of these reasons is the fact that the sultanate's imports of fuel and lubricating materials declined by 87.2 percent in 1983, compared with 1982. This is because an oil refinery was built in the port of al-Fahl to refine Oman's crude oil; Oman was thus able to do without importing some oil products.

The most important countries from which the sultanate imported the goods it needed in 1983 were Japan (22 percent); the United Kingdom (18.64 percent); the United Arab Emirates (17.54 percent); the United States of America (7.72 percent); West Germany (7.32 percent); the Netherlands (3.35 percent); India (2.3 percent); France (2.13 percent); Italy (2.07 percent); Singapore (1.94 percent); and other countries.

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OMAN

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWED

Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 27 Jul 85 pp 48-49

[Article: "A Year of Industrial Development in Oman: 140 Factories Produce 76 Million Riyals of Goods"]

[Text] Major strides are achieved in the Sultanate of Oman's economic prosperity.

One of the direct reasons for that prosperity is the government's confidence in the private sector's ability and role in the development process.

A report by the United Nations' Development Program in the Arab World praised the industrial development that has been achieved in recent years by the Sultanate of Oman. The report attributed the progress to the industrial development plan that was adopted by Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id when he assumed power in the country.

Celebrations commemorating the 15th anniversary of Sultan Qabus assuming power were linked with the inauguration of a large group of new factories. This year the number of new factories has exceeded 150. These factories are engaged in a variety of industrial activities such as manufacturing cosmetics, cement, cookies, batteries and eyeglasses.

Anyone who has been watching the activities of the industrial sector in the sultanate will have observed quite clearly the steady growth that sector did experience from 1976 to 1980. This is the period that coincides with the onset of the country's first 5-Year Plan. During that period the number of industrial establishments in the country rose significantly, and the volume of government and private investments amounted to about 75 million Omani riyals. The GNP from industry rose from 4 million Omani riyals to 17.5 Omani riyals in 1984. It is expected that by the end of 1985 the GNP from industry will rise to 76 million riyals.

The attention that the state has been devoting to that sector manifested itself in the laws that have been issued to regulate and encourage investments in industry. The state has joined the private sector in establishing a number of industrial projects and in establishing the Oman Development Bank, which

contributes effectively to the progress of industrial development in the country. In addition, the state established the Rusayl Industrial Region, which is becoming a huge industrial complex that includes numerous heavy and light industries. That region reflects the industrial development that the country is currently experiencing.

The Rusayl Industrial Region project is considered one of the major projects of the second 5-Year plan (1981-1985). In addition to the infrastructure projects that are necessary for such an undertaking, there are fish cutting and freezing projects, projects for assembling air conditioning units and water pumps, projects for manufacturing lubricating oils, projects for manufacturing perfumes and cosmetics and a project for building a plastics factory.

The Rusayl Industrial Region, which is located on 60 hectares of land, has a vocational training center, a maintenance center and a spare parts center that serve the industries that are built in that region.

Oman's Ministry of Trade and Industry has so far received 75 applications from local industrial firms that wish to build plants in Rusayl. Among these applications are requests to build 39 new factories; and 18 factories wish to relocate their facilities to the industrial region.

It is expected that different industries will be established in the Industrial Region. These will include industries for manufacturing metal products, marble products, ready-to-use concrete, lamps, aluminum and batteries.

The copper smelting and casting plant in the administrative division of Suhar is considered a heavy industrial project. It is seen as an integrated project in which copper smelting and molding processes are carried out. This project is also considered a catalyst in the development of other economic projects. Operations on that huge project began in 1979, and the first shipment of its production, 500 tons, was exported to Rotterdam in the Netherlands in 1984.

In 1983 construction of the Oman oil refinery was completed. The refinery, whose operating capacity is 50,000 barrels a day, refines oil derivatives. Its aim is to help the sultanate become self-sufficient in the production of oil derivatives. The refinery contributes to the establishment of complementary petroleum industries such as gas liquefaction and petrochemicals.

The state has encouraged the production of cement. Two cement plants have been built in Rusayl and in Raysut in the southern region. This is because the primary raw materials for that industry, such as limestone, lime and gypsum are available in abundance in Oman's soil. These raw materials constitute 99 percent of the requirements for the cement industry.

An animal feed production plant was inaugurated in 1984. It was furnished with what is according to world standards the most modern equipment. The plant produces and provides all kinds of basic and supplementary animal feed, and this will make a significant contribution to the development of the country's animal resources and the achievement of self-sufficiency in red meat. In addition, the plant also produces feed for fish.

In February 1984 a clay brick plant was inaugurated in (al-'Udhaybah) Industrial Region. This plant utilizes an automated process to produce clay brick from clay found in the desert. The new plant produces more than 600 kinds of bricks to meet the country's needs for bricks for construction. It produces in particular that kind of brick which used to be imported from the United Arab Emirates. The first plant for all kinds of detergents has also been inaugurated in the region of al-Ghabrah . This plant is considered the first of its kind to be built in the country by the private sector, and it clearly manifests the cooperation that exists between the government and private sectors for the progress of Oman.

Because of the importance of the role the private sector in Oman can play in shoring up the country's development and making progress in its industrial development, the government assigned several projects to the private sector.

The fact that it assigned projects to the private sector reflects the confidence the government has in the private sector's abilities and resources. Oman's Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays a leading role in the progress of industrial development and in shoring up Oman's economy.

In the context of the government's cooperation with the private sector, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has issued permits to representatives of some firms and to Omani businessmen authorizing them to establish the National Company for Aluminum Products.

This company will build its factory in Rusayl Industrial Region. This factory will be built in accordance with the most modern standard specifications in the world, and it will be furnished with the most modern machines and equipment.

The ministry has also approved the establishment of a group of new Omani companies, and it has issued permits accordingly. The activities of these companies include construction, food processing, and manufacturing fishing products and medical requirements.

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PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

BRIEFS

LEBANESE INDUSTRIAL EXPOSITION--The president of the Society of Lebanese Industrialists, Doctor Fu'ad Abi Salih, said that the society will begin preparations for an industrial exposition in Aden if the necessary conditions for its success are available. Abi Salih said that this comes after the success of the Sanaa exposition which yielded \$5.5 million worth of agreements and contracts to establish factories in Yemen based on Lebanese experience and technology in the management of factories and the supplying of partially manufactured primary materials to the new Yemeni industries. This is in the framework of economic integration to aid the industrial rebirth of Lebanon. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 6 Jul 85 p 39] 12390

CSO: 4404/418

INDIA

RAJIV MEETING WITH SIKH DELEGATION REPORTED

New Delhi PATRIOT in English 2 Aug 85 p 1

[Text]

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Friday asked the Sikhs to use their potential, for which they are well-known, to eliminate extremists from the country, report PTI, UNI.

Addressing a 500-strong Sikh delegation in Delhi, he said conditions should not be created again which helped the extremists and terrorists to raise their head in Punjab.

The delegation called on the Prime Minister to congratulate him for having solved the Punjab problem.

The delegation told Mr Gandhi that the Sikhs all over the country were extremely grateful to him for the rare magnanimity and kind heartedness which he showed by signing the 'memorandum of settlement' with Akali Dal president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal.

The Prime Minister told the delegation that it was his hope that the Sikhs would eliminate the extremists and strengthen the unity of the country.

Mr Gandhi said the Punjab agitation had been on for about three to four years and many persons, who were working neither in the national interest

nor for Sikhs, took advantage of it.

With the signing of the accord with Sant Longowal a few days ago, the agitation had ended and those people who were giving a bad name to Sikhs now stood exposed.

Now it was time to remove any ill-feelings among the people and to see that all worked for the progress and prosperity of Punjab and the country as a whole, he said.

Mr Gandhi pointed out that the prolonged agitation had adversely affected the development activities in the State which was earlier in the forefront in every sphere of life.

Now that the agitation was over "we have to bring back Punjab on the road to prosperity". He said the Government had taken many steps in that regard and it had to be supplemented by the people.

Mr Gandhi said work on the Thein dam had started a few months ago and on completion it would help farmers in the State a great deal. The Centre had also decided to set up a railway coach manufacturing unit in the State and hoped that it would start operation

soon.

Mr Gandhi said the Thein dam and the coach factory would fulfil the long-pending demands of farmers and industrial workers in the State.

Referring to the rich cultural heritage of Punjab, Mr Gandhi said the Centre has decided to open a cultural centre at Patiala. He hoped that more such centres would be set up in other places.

He made a fervent appeal to the people to forget their political differences and work unitedly to make the State prosperous once again.

The delegation submitted a letter to the Prime Minister stating that the entire Sikh community was grateful for the rare "magnanimity and kind heartedness" exhibited by him in signing the Punjab accord.

CSO: 4600/1852

INDIA

ANALYST DISCUSSES VISIT OF AFGHANI FOREIGN MINISTER

Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Aug 85 p 9

[Article by G. K. Reddy]

[Text] There have been some useful exchanges behind the scenes between Indian leaders and the visiting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Shah Mohammed Dost, providing a deeper insight into the latest Afghan and Soviet thinking on the possibilities of an accord with the United States and Pakistan leading to a phased withdrawal of Soviet forces.

Mr. Dost gave the impression that the Babrak Karmel regime was prepared to go more than half way in responding to any positive suggestions by Pakistan during the next round of the "proximity talks" in Geneva later this month.

During his meeting today with the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Afghan Foreign Minister explained the implications of the new ideas put forward by the U.N. Secretary-General's special representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, at the last round of talks in Geneva that are now being pursued through diplomatic channels to pave the way for more substantive discussions during the next round later this month. These ideas, it was pointed out, were not in the nature of any new proposals, but only in the form of certain concepts that could be developed into a broadly acceptable political framework for negotiating a lasting settlement of the Afghan problem.

UN approach: The new U.N. approach, based on some preliminary sounding of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union, seeks to uphold the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned character of Afghanistan without prejudice to its special relationship with the Soviet Union. It gives the present revolutionary regime in Nabol enough flexibility to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with other neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Iran, while resuming normal relations with other big powers including the United States.

But an essential pre-condition for an accord is a clear-cut Soviet commitment to withdraw its troops in a phased manner within an agreed time-frame. The Afghan Government will be entitled to retain a Soviet military mission of limited

strength to train its army, if the bulk of the troops are withdrawn as part of a wider settlement.

The new U.N. formula, which has the blessings of the U.S. State Department, has been described as something approximating to a Finlandisation of Afghanistan, drawing a distinction between self-imposed neutrality and preservation of a special relationship with a big neighbour like the Soviet Union, without diluting the sovereignty or compromising the non-aligned character of Afghanistan. If the concept is accepted by both sides without undue reservations, an agreement based on it could be reinforced with credible guarantees against renewed Soviet intervention or American interference through Pakistan in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Delhi view: The Indian view is that the current series of proximity talks should lead to a direct dialogue first between Afghanistan and Pakistan and later between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The other countries could be brought into the picture for underwriting the agreement reached to give it the status of an international accord fully backed by the United Nations.

As India sees it, the great advantage of such an accord from Pakistan's point of view would be an acceptance of the Durand Line by Afghanistan, in the process securing adequate guarantees against any territorial violations of its present frontiers which exclude the tribal areas that are referred to as Pakhtoonistan. It would also leave the Babrak Karmel Government free to arrive at an accord with the insurgents, who are much more fiercely opposed to the prolongation of the Soviet military occupation than the continuance of a pro-Soviet regime in power in Afghanistan.

It is a highly complex problem that has to be tackled with imagination and patience for finding a lasting solution, but a hopeful beginning can be made if the two superpowers are in a mood to resolve it without detriment to their regional interests. And what is important is that the new U.N. initiative has helped to end the long impasse and hold out some promise of accord which augurs well for further negotiations.

INDIA

ANALYST TELLS INDIAN STAND ON TAMIL NEGOTIATIONS

'Pattern on Devolution'

Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Aug 85 p 1

[Article by G. K. Reddy]

[Text] NEW DELHI, Aug. 5.

There are indications that the Sri Lankan Government is veering round to the view that a viable solution to the ethnic problem could be found within the framework of Annexure "C" with some cosmetic changes to give it an aura of autonomy to the Tamil majority area without disturbing the present provincial demarcations.

But the tragic events of the last two years have hardened feelings to such an extent that the limited devolution envisaged in Annexure "C" is no longer acceptable to the Tamil community whose minimum demand is for the same degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Indian States.

The Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, who had promised during his summit meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, in Delhi in early June to follow the Indian pattern of devolution to the extent possible under his country's unitary Constitution, is now reported to be hedging the issue by talking of Annexure "C" as a suitable basis for settling the Tamil problem.

Extent of delegation

It envisaged the delegation of both executive and legislative powers besides making provision for the appointment of a council of Ministers commanding the confidence of the elected bodies subject to the overall supremacy of Parliament and the over-riding authority of the President. The powers to be delegated to the Northern and Eastern Provinces, with the port area of Trincomalee being treated as a Centrally-administered zone, included law and order, land policy, education, social welfare and cultural promotion within certain specified limits.

After the detailed discussions between Indian and Sri Lankan legal experts in Delhi, certain drafts had been prepared for making appropriate amendments to the Sri Lankan Constitution with a two-thirds majority without re-

course to a referendum, if the necessary political understanding was reached between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil leaders on the degree of devolution in consonance with Mr. Jayewardene's promise to concede the same sort of powers available to Indian States. But at the first round of talks in Thimpu last month, the Sri Lankan delegation tried to do some back-peddalling by talking of starting off the new dialogue from the point at which the previous discussions were broken off at the end of the all-party conference.

The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari, is leaving for Colombo on Thursday, August 8, with a message from the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, to urge Mr. Jayewardene to come forward with a more credible set of proposals capable of meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people. The Tamil leaders too are being told that instead of talking in terms of first principles, they should also go prepared to Thimpu for the second round of talks opening on August 12 with their counter-proposals for a serious discussion on all aspects of the proposed devolution.

PM's direct charge

An interesting new development on the Indian side is that lately the Prime Minister himself has been handling the Sri Lankan issue, taking such advice he deems necessary without delegating the task to anybody else. He continues to consult Mr. G. Parthasarathi on every aspect of the problem, although he has been utilising Mr. Bhandari as a special envoy to keep open a line of direct communication with the Sri Lankan President and his colleagues.

Advice to Participants

Madras THE HINDU in English 10 Aug 85 p 1

[Article by G. K. Reddy]

[Text]

NEW DELHI, Aug. 9.

The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari, has gone to Colombo with the brief to tell the Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, in all earnestness that the current series of talks in Thimpu are his last chance to settle the Tamil problem and that a failure to avail himself of this opportunity might plunge his country in a bigger turmoil with tragic consequences.

The Tamil leaders, especially the militants, have been told in a similar manner that they should adopt a reasonable stance and respond positively to any Sri Lankan offer of concessions which are worthy of serious consideration.

India's expectation

The Indian expectation is that the Sri Lankan delegation will come forward with some new ideas of devolution at the next round of talks opening on Monday in Thimpu, which could be deemed to be a marked advance on what had been offered at the last round of discussions. The Tamil leaders also are being prevailed upon to be ready with their counter-proposals for a fuller measure of autonomy for their linguistic region followed by an effective share of power in the Central Government within the framework of the present unitary Constitution.

Equal devolution

According to reports reaching Delhi through diplomatic sources, the latest thinking in Sri Lanka is to devolve powers equally to all the nine Provinces instead of doing so only in the case of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Sri Lankan President and his advisers are reported to be reconciling themselves to the thought of delegating powers directly to the provincial councils by giving up the earlier scheme for treating the 25 District Councils as basic units for devolution.

An incongruity

The Indian constitutional experts had pointed out during their discussions with the Sri Lankan jurists the incongruity of provinces deriving their powers from districts. A more appropriate course would be to devolve powers to the provinces through an Act of Parliament and not as a part of the so-called participatory democracy working its way up from the village level through the revenue sub-divisions, to the districts, then to the Provinces and finally to Parlia-

ment itself through a Council of State serving as a second chamber without any effective role.

During his summit meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, in Delhi in early June, Mr. Jayewardene had agreed to devolve powers to the Provinces on the Indian lines. But, on his return to Colombo, he tried to revive the old District Councils concept with the plea that the Union Territories pattern in India conformed better with Sri Lanka's unitary Constitution.

Closer to Annexure 'C'

The two sides are now edging closer to the concept of devolution spelt out in Annexure "C" which Mr. Jayewardene had accepted in principle, but wriggled out of it later under pressure from the hardliners in his Cabinet besides the Buddhist elements. A big mistake that India made at that time was not to have asked him to initial the document for record purposes, which would have committed him in writing to the idea of more substantial devolution of legislative, executive and judicial powers to the Northern and Eastern Provinces as part of a lasting political settlement of the Tamil problem.

The Sri Lankan President and his advisers are also trying to constrict the proposed limited autonomy for provinces, especially in the Northern and Eastern regions, by restricting the delimitation of constituencies to prevent the Tamil community from securing an overwhelming majority in the District Council elections. They are opposed to the idea of direct elections to the Provincial Councils which are to function as legislatures with a cabinet system of local governments responsible to them.

Balance of concessions

The Government of India is doing everything possible to avert the danger of a breakdown of the Thimpu talks while continuing to persuade the Sri Lankan President and the Tamil leaders to strive for an equitable solution through a balance of concessions in a spirit of mutual accommodation. The Indian diplomacy is aimed at keeping this dialogue moving towards a settlement by keeping up the tempo of conciliation.

The whole accent, therefore, is on dissuading Mr. Jayewardene from dragging his feet under the mistaken notion of gaining time, while urging the Tamil leaders simultaneously not to miss this chance to arrive at a reasonable compromise that would enable them to live with dignity and security as part of a single Sri Lankan State.

INDIA

SOURCES NOTE CARDOVEZ EXPECTATIONS ON AFGHANISTAN

Madras THE HINDU in English 12 Aug 85 p 1

[Article by G. K. Reddy]

[Text]

NEW DELHI, Aug. 11.

The U.N. Secretary-General's special emissary, Mr. Diego Cordovez, does not expect to achieve a breakthrough during the current series of proximity talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan, until the leaders of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, have discussed the problem and arrived at some understanding during their summit meeting in Geneva in November, according to well-informed sources here.

But the U.N. emissary is trying to narrow down the differences by pressing forward with his four-point formula at the next round of proximity talks opening in Geneva on August 27 to enable the U.S. President, Mr. Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader, Mr. Gorbachev, to work out a widely acceptable solution to the Afghan problem, if it is at all possible, in the present circumstances.

Four points

The four-point formula evolved by Mr. Cordovez in consultation with the Afghan and Pakistan Foreign Ministers envisages a treaty between Afghanistan and Pakistan guaranteeing each other's territorial integrity, and pledging non-interference, another treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union providing the necessary international guarantees to this agreement, a protocol stipulating the procedures for the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes in conditions of peace and security without any fear of persecution, and finally an accord between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union for a phased withdrawal of Soviet troops within a stipulated time-frame.

Afghan stand

The Pakistan Government is prepared to agree to this four-point approach provided the time-frame prescribed for Soviet withdrawals is precise and free from preconditions. But the Afghan side, presumably acting at the instance of the Soviet Union, continues to maintain that this is entirely a matter between Kabul and Moscow in which neither Islamabad nor Washington can have any voice.

The process of Soviet withdrawals at the re-

quest of the Afghan Government, so the argument runs, can be expedited only by faithfully implementing the other three stages of the four-point formula, which entails on Pakistan the responsibility of dismantling the rebel camps on its territory and preventing the U.S. from arming, training and inciting the insurgents to carry on their guerilla warfare against what is claimed to be the legally constituted revolutionary regime in Kabul that is going to be a signatory to these agreements.

The Geneva talks are thus stuck over the link of the withdrawals issue to the implementation of the other three accords to the full satisfaction of the Afghan and Soviet Governments. This contention of Kabul and Moscow is not acceptable to the U.S. and Pakistan. The earlier formula presented by Mr. Cordovez in 1982-83 after his informal soundings in Moscow and Washington provided for a single document containing all these elements in an agreed sequence to be underwritten by the five permanent members of the Security Council to give the accord the status of an international agreement.

Big hurdle

It is difficult to visualise at this stage how Mr. Cordovez is going to tackle this problem when the Afghan and Pakistan Foreign Ministers, Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost and Mr. Yaqub Khan, meet in Geneva later this month for resuming the proximity talks under the U.N. auspices. His efforts to arrange a direct meeting between the Afghan and Pakistan Foreign Ministers, or even at a lower level between senior officials, cannot make headway until the two sides are fairly clear in their minds about the broad framework of the proposed agreement and the inter-relation between its various components, especially the sequence of their implementation.

Faced with this big hurdle, the U.N. emissary has been veering round to the view that the stalemate can be ended only through some understanding between the two superpowers in the context of their wider efforts to avoid frictions. The summit agenda that is being worked out by U.S. and Soviet officials provides among other things for a discussion of regional issues in a bilateral context to eliminate geopolitical conflicts of interest.

IRAN

BRIEFS

URBAN 'GUERRILLAS' ARRESTED--Members of two active teams of the Mojahedin-e Khalq organization have been identified and arrested in Mashhad. The rounding up of the guerrillas took 1 month. Several pieces of weaponry and explosives were confiscated. In a statement issued on the arrest, the intelligence headquarters of Khorasan Province said the arrested persons intended to use the weapons to "assassinate several innocent people, carry out acts of sabotage, and bomb various places to create an atmosphere of panic and fear" and to "cause disturbances" in the recently held presidential elections. [Summary] [Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 20 Aug 85 p 19 GF]

CSO: 4600/612

PAKISTAN

BRIEFS

MINISTER TALKS ABOUT OIL PRODUCTION TESTS--Islamabad, Aug 17: The production testing from two zones in South Mazari, 47 kilometers southeast of Huderabad in Badin District has established the combined flow rate of 2,128 barrels of oil per day. This was disclosed by the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Resources Dr Mohammad Asad, at a press conference here on Saturday. The Minister said that from zone one, the flow of oil was established at the rate of 2,097 barrels per day and from the zone two 1,281 barrels per day, making the combined flow rate of 2,128 barrels per day. Dr Asad said the oil was discovered in the lower goru formation of cretaceous age in the interval 3920-3988 feet. The thickness of net oil sand is 27 feet, having an average porosity of 16 percent based on the geological, logging and drilling data, two separate zones were selected for production testing. Zone No 1 (3976-3988 feet) showed flow rate up to 2,097 barrels of oil per day on 48/64" choke with flowing pressure of 285 PSI and a gravity of 43.6 degrees API. Zone No 2 (3920-3930 feet) on production testing flowed oil at the rate of 1,281 barrels per day on 48/64" choke with flowing pressure of 177 PSI and 42.8 degrees API gravity. The combined flow rate from the two producing zones was tested at 2,128 barrels of oil per day on 48/64" choke with a gravity of 43.1 degrees API at 60 degrees F and flowing pressure of 200 PSI, he added. Dr Asad said that seismic investigations shows that the structure covers an area of 800 acres with a vertical closure of 120 feet. [Excerpts] [Karachi DAWN in English 18 Aug 85 Business Supplement p I GF]

SIND OIL PRODUCTION FIGURES REPORTED--Karachi, Aug 25: Three new oil fields in Sind have proven reserves of 52 million barrels and are producing between 18,000 to 20,000 barrels a day, Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr Mohammad Asad Khan said here on Sunday. He told a news conference the three wells, Leghari, Khaskjeli and Tando Alam respectively had 6 million, and 40 million barrels of recoverable reserves and their output will continue at the present rate for ten years. He said in the northern areas between 18,000 to 20,000 BPD were being obtained from four fields--Meyal, Toot, Dhurnol and Adhi. The minister explained that recent discoveries at Dabhi, Nari, Turk, Mazari, Tajedi and Mazari south, were not yet on production, nor reserves had been determined in these fields. The sustained production of oil, currently at between 36,000 to 37,000 BPD, was, therefore, not exaggerated. It would increase as more fields start producing oil. The minister, however, said the total domestic oil production was meeting only 25 percent of the demand as in the last two years the consumption had jumped up from about 120,000 BPD to 160,000 BPD. This was because of increase in the use of oil for producing electricity and cement. [Excerpt] [Karachi DAWN in English 26 Aug 85 Business Supplement p 1 GF]